

SOUTH VIETNAM

- I. Vietnamese Army apparently moving cautiously against Hoa Hao rebels (7,000) under General Soai.
 - A. No major fighting has yet developed; Soai's troops apparently surrounded in small quadrilateral between Bassac and Mekong Rivers.
 - B. Other rebel force (3,000) under Ba Cut, --although given to tough talk--has not moved to support Soai nor has Vietnamese Army moved against it.
 - C. Anti-Soai campaign might end quickly through large-scale rebel defections, or could drag on for weeks as clearing operation.
 - D. But Army's heavy superiority in numbers and weapons leaves little doubt of eventual outcome.

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II. Most pressing question elsewhere on

horizon is problem of July '55 talks

with Viet Minh on '55 all-Vietnam elections.

**A. Viet Minh stepping up campaign to put
over its own interpretation Geneva
terms.**

**B. C-in-C Giap, has made speech (22 May)
citing "new phase" in struggle to
implement Geneva agreement.**

**1. Said most important problem in
sight was to prepare for consulta-
tions to be held from 20 July
onward, as specified by Geneva
declarations.**

**C. Giap blasted alleged US effort to
sabotage election plans; claimed
Defense Secretary Wilson, on eve of
Geneva, had made clear US intent to
make Vietnam demarcation line permanent,
like Korea.**

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1. Giap praised French spokesmen for their assurances that Geneva terms would be faithfully adhered to.

D. At press conference in Hanoi on 6 June, Viet Minh Vice Premier (Phan Van Dong) cited Geneva terms in brushing aside question whether consultation conference might not be held.

1. Dong put French on notice, stating "the other signatory of the Geneva agreements, and the interested parties must execute their obligation."

E. Viet Minh spokesmen taking care to state they will give all guarantees necessary to insure "completely free elections."

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1. London Daily Worker correspondent,

Wilfred Burchett, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] stated at Bandung in April that Vietnam was one place where elections could be held on British model since Communists sure of winning.

III. France, as Geneva signatory, showing concern regarding responsibilities contracted for.

A. French see Diem's proposed Saigon 4-Power Conference as chance to pressure Vietnamese to take initiative on pre-election consultations.

B. French suggest that Western powers propose either that two Geneva presidents (Eden and Molotov) make approach to two Vietnam parties or that ICC do so; French prefer former.

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- IV. Dien government, meanwhile apparently planning to use two arguments as basis for backing away from any talks with Viet Minh, at least in July.
- A. Main argument is that South Vietnam not a signatory to Geneva agreement, thus not bound by its terms.
 - B. Other argument--or stall--is that only popularly elected National Assembly (which will not come into existence before fall) can deal with such vital matters.
 - C. In addition, Dien has recently linked the status of the French Expeditionary Corps to subject of elections.

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1. He regards it essential that Vietnamese sovereignty be unquestioned and complete before any declaration on free elections is made.

D. Diem also points out that his case different from Adenauer and Rhee who have full backing of Western powers; he wants similar Western agreement on his government.

E. When any declaration on elections made, Diem wants to fully dissociate his government from Geneva accords.

F. He feels this necessary to prevent ICC, which he profoundly distrusts, from coming in and taking over election arrangements.

V. These South Vietnamese points will scarcely impress Viet Minh or--perhaps more importantly--the Indians.

A. Indian ICC chairman, on 31 May, said

**"if French had authority and its has
passed to Vietnamese, the latter are
responsible; but we do not know how
much has passed to Vietnamese."**

B. Questioned on whether Vietnamese

**"automatically inherit" responsibility
of Geneva signatory, Indian said that
is legal question to be studied when
it arises.**

C. Canadians on ICC take position that

**Commission members have no role re-
garding elections until both sides
agreed on all details.**

D. But Indians, with support of Poles,

unlikely to accept so passive a role.

A. Article 7 of this document states:

"The conference declares that, so far as Vietnam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedom guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. In order that the restoration of peace may have made sufficient progress and that there may be present all the necessary conditions to permit the free expression of the national will, general elections will take place in July 1956, under the control of an international commission composed of representatives of the states which are members of the international commission for supervision and control provided for in the accord on

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the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will take place on this subject between competent representative authorities of the two zones after July 20, 1955."

- B. The French Foreign Office recently stated that legal office has interpreted this article as meaning that Vietnamese-Viet Minh contact should take place on 20 July 1955, and not just at some time subsequent thereto.

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